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AUTHOR Stewart, James H.
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ABSTRACT

This research paper presents a model of organizational effectiveness based on the open system perspective and tests four hypotheses concerning organizational effectiveness factors. Organizational effectiveness can be defined as the extent to which a social system makes progress toward objectives based on the four phases of organizational development -- foundation, consolidation, operation, and achievement of goals. The four hypotheses tested were: 1) goal priority of the leadership will be positively associated with goal effectiveness; 2) leadership value and interest orientation will be positively, but differentially, associated with multiple goals; 3) goal priority and leadership value and interest orientations taken together will be more strongly associated with goal effectiveness than they were when taken separately in the first two hypotheses; and 4) over time the leadership value orientation will become increasingly important in explaining goal effectiveness. Support is presented for all four hypotheses. The author concludes that of the four dimensions of organizational effectiveness, goal effectiveness is the most important. (DW)

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A CONSIDERATION OF FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR GOAL EFFECTIVENESS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

by

James [illegible]
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INTRODUCTION

Effectiveness of an organization has been a consideration to both researcher and practitioner especially decision makers for some years now. Despite the marked interest in the subject, much confusion exists regarding the definition, theoretical approach, dimensions, and measurement of effectiveness (Hall, 1972: 95-102).

The purpose of this paper is to present both a model of organizational effectiveness based on the open system perspective and to test several hypotheses concerning goal effectiveness factors. I am interested in the effect of values and goal priorities of policy leaders on goal effectiveness viewed within different time frames.

The model asserts that effectiveness is related to a variety of organizational objectives stemming from the functional requirements of the organization and hence the definition of effectiveness must be multidimensional.

The study points to the need of establishing a benchmark to evaluate the progress or effectiveness of a single organization. Either an external criterion is to impossible to make a comparative analysis of the organization attainments. This can be done by studying similar organizations or the same organization over time. I chose the latter.

The research subject is an organization of Catholic priests which began in the wake of Vatican Council II. The National Federation of Priest's Councils (NFPC) is a unique organization which exhibits goals inherent within the characteristics of a

professional association. The NFPC is a federation of 131 local councils. Of these, ninety-nine are senates, twenty-nine are associations, and three are religious order councils. The present governing body is made up of a 208-member unit named the House of Delegates. The principal goal of the organization is to press for changes in the Roman Catholic Church in the area of priests' rights and social justice concerns. The NFPC is a change-oriented organization which is both deviant and illegitimate in the eyes of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

There are significant differences between the types of affiliated councils. Senates are authorized in the dioceses by the bishops and serve at their pleasure, and exist to assist the bishop in the area of the priestly role, diocesan government, personnel policy, and pastoral matters. The free associations, on the other hand, were established without the authorization or subsequent approval of their bishops and work more independently from the bishops.

The difference between these two types of affiliates has caused a considerable amount of friction both within the NFPC and in the relations of the NFPC with the NCCB. The NFPC has been told by the NCCB that recognition will not be given to the NFPC with its current composition (see Flynn, 1972).

A Model of Organizational Effectiveness

Previous research on effectiveness has employed the following conceptual frameworks: (1) goal achievement, (2) system resource

(3) organizational means and ends, and (4) functional requirements model (see Ghorpade, 1970:31-40 and 1971). The last three approaches are specifications of the open system schema.

There are two components of the goal approach (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967:891-903). First, there is the "prescribed goal approach" which, according to the above authors (1967:892), "... is characterized by a focus on the formal charter of the organization, or in some category of its personnel (usually its top management) as the most valid source of information concerning organizational goals. ..." Second, there is the "derived goal approach" in which the investigator, according to the same authors (1967:892), "... derives the ultimate goal of the organization from his (functional) theory, thus arriving at goals which may be independent of the intentions and awareness of the members. ..."

The prescribed goal approach has been the most widely criticized by students of organization. White (1960), Perrow (1961), and Price (1968) among others have employed the goal approach as a major tool in their assessment of organizational success.

Yuchtman and Seashore criticize the prescribed goal approach with respect to goal identification. They state that this component of the goal approach "... has failed to provide a rationale for the empirical identification of goals as an organizational property. ..."

The derived goal approach (cf. the works of Parsons, 1956 and 1960) is criticized by Yuchtman and Seashore (1967:892) with respect to its basis for the evaluation of effectiveness. They

state that the derived goal approach: ". . . has no difficulty identifying the ultimate goal of the organization, since the latter is implied by the internal logic of the model, but the . . . model does not take the organization as the frame of reference. . . ."

The derived goal approach uses society, not the organization, as the frame of reference for the evaluation of organizational effectiveness. If the benefit of society is the basis which is used to evaluate effectiveness, then the basis of evaluation is external to the organization, according to them.

Seashore and Yuchtman view the organization as an open system exploiting its environment in the acquisition of scarce resources. An organization is most effective when it ". . . optimizes its resource procurement" (1967:898). This approach eliminates goals as a dimension of effectiveness and concentrates on the adaptation function. However, the authors admit that several of their ten resource procurement factors could be considered as goals. Moreover, Price (1971:8-10) points to the difficulty of measuring optimization.

The approach of Georgopoulos and Tannenbaum (1957:534-540) employed multiple criteria based on organizational ends and means. They claimed that productivity, flexibility in terms of internal and external adaptations, and absence of tension and conflict within subgroups are dimensions of effectiveness and have applicability to most organizations. This strategy has been used by Bennis (1966) and Friedlander and Pickle (1968:281-304) to study

these relationships within organizations which are by constitution multifunctional. Price (1971:3-15) provides an excellent review of these major approaches to effectiveness.

The present state of research suggests that the development of some overall measure of effectiveness hasn't been fruitful. Researchers have increasingly employed a multidimensional approach (Guion, 1961:141-149; Katz and Kahn, 1966; Mahoney and Weitzel, 1969:357-365; Mott, 1972). To organizational output, adaptive functions, and operative goals, one must add consolidation factors such as communication, collaboration, and cohesion (Stewart, 1970: 630-639). These dimensions will differ in their importance in light of such factors as time sequence, values of decision makers and clients, turnover of leadership, and structural factors such as centralization. Seashore (1965) develops a hierarchy of criteria based on means vs. ends framework. Mahoney and Weitzel (1969:357-365) make use of this distinction in their multiple-dimensional approach to effectiveness. They state that (1969:362): "The research and development managers . . . use cooperative behavior, staff development, and reliable performance as high order criteria; and efficiency productivity and output behavior as lower order criteria."

What is needed is a model which is able both to specify the multiple dimensions and their specific measures of effectiveness and to be useful as a conceptual framework for comparative purposes. A framework of organizational effectiveness can be derived from system requirements which are related to the organization's

internal and external environment. These familiar functional requirements are goal attainment, adaptation, integration, and latency (Parsons, 1956, confer also Scott, 1959; Caplow, 1964: 124-126 for similar formulations).

An organization has a natural history through which it moves through different phases of development (Hughes, 1958:56-67). Four phases can be identified: (1) foundation, (2) consolidation, (3) operations, and (4) achievement of goals. There's no implication that these phases are discrete intervals nor is unilinear development assumed. An organization must also successfully but differentially meet the four functional requirements to maintain itself and survive. One requirement demands more attention and emphasis at a certain time than another.

The problems of external adaptation, integration and latency are related in a special way to the foundation and consolidation phases while other adaptive functions and goal attainment are related to the operations and achievement phases. The operational and goal attainment functions may not be empirically distinguishable except in cases of goal succession (Sills, 1957). For my purposes these two phases can be subsumed under the concept of "performance."

Organizational effectiveness, then, can be framed in terms of the above objectives. I call these objectives: (1) acquisition, (2) consolidation, (3) power, and (4) goal. Thus, I define effectiveness as the extent to which a social system makes progress toward its acquisition, consolidation, power, and goal objectives. See Figure I.

Place Figure I here

The four categories of objectives constitute a scheme which serves to arrange a discussion of the separate dimensions into a coherent framework. This affords us a tool of analysis to explore and to identify the significant elements and processes that contribute to this or that form of organizational effectiveness and generate explanatory hypotheses about the determinants of the effectiveness syndrome at different phases of organizational development. The criteria of this framework allow one to compare effectiveness in terms of subsystem units, similar systems, and the system itself over time. Since organizations are different in terms of size, functions, and environment, it is helpful to employ this model within an organizational classification scheme such as Etzioni's compliance model (1961).

In sum, I have argued that organizational effectiveness is multidimensional. Price (1971) and Seashore (1965) would view the acquisition, consolidation, and power objectives as means or penultimate goals. If the four objectives, derived from Parsons's AGIL framework, are viewed as necessary conditions for the functioning and survival of an organization, then their effectiveness is basically necessary. Consolidation effectiveness may not be as important as goal effectiveness but it is just as necessary.

In this paper I am not interested in the sub-models of acquisition, consolidation, and power effectiveness. I have provided an empirical assessment of these dimensions elsewhere (see Stewart, 1974). My interest here is the goal effectiveness dimension.

According to Price (1971:5-6) and others (see especially Gross 1968; 1969), the focus on goal effectiveness research should be on (1) the decision-makers of the organization, (2) organizational goals as distinguished from private goals of the leaders and participants, (3) the actual goals in contrast to "official" goals of the organization, and (4) the intentions and activities of the leadership. I have utilized these guidelines in researching goal effectiveness.

I define goal effectiveness as the extent to which an organization successfully realizes or makes progress towards its actual goals.

I adopted the strategy of assessing effectiveness from the top leadership perspective because the clients as well as the NFPC's adversaries are much less informed about its internal organization and its variable progress toward establishment, priority, and attainment of actual goals.

I have taken into consideration the influence of intentions and activities of decision makers in setting goals and their priorities. But I also contend that these intentions and activities have an influence on goal effectiveness or progress. Values and interests are aspects of leadership intentions insofar as they shed light on the aims and directions of organizational leadership.

A value-oriented person expects rights or accepts duties in generalized terms independently of his particular relationship to the other person or group. Values are of many types. I am concerned with the basic rights of people such as the freedom of conscience or right to lawful dissent. Interests refer to special rights and to an allocation of goods which particular individuals or groups desire (La Palombara, 1964). Thus I am concerned how values and interests as here defined as well as priority setting affect the effectiveness of different organizational goals. The goals, as will be shown, are of two types. I call them commonweal and particularistic.

Movements for change will vary and take different directions depending on whether the participants are value-oriented or interest-oriented. Turner and Killian (1957:331-385) summarize the point in stating that value-oriented movements point in the direction of changing a social institution for the greater common good. These organizations are concerned with societal reform rather than personal reward. Movements of self interest, which they call power-oriented movements, are directed more toward gaining some recognition or special status. The incentives of interest-oriented actors are the approval of the people that they either love, fear, or respect. Interest-oriented actors take action, but such action must always be calculated in terms of personal or group gains and losses. Their operating principle is to act with caution and not ignore those who have the power (Neal, 1965:45-54). A study by Nelson (1964) supports the relationship between values and interests and types of change. He found that individuals who defined the Church in terms of the

local congregation's interests were more resistant to a Church merger than those who defined the Church in value terms such as the "Communion of Saints."

Research Design

Data for this study were collected from two cross-sectional surveys of the total population of the NFPC House of Delegates. The first questionnaire was mailed out to the delegates in January, 1970. Ninety percent of the questionnaires were returned, yielding data on 201 delegates out of 224 in the population. The second questionnaire was administered in March, 1972, yielding a return of 89 percent representing 186 respondents out of the total population of 208 delegates. This return rate of questionnaires in both studies is considered quite adequate to characterize the parameters of the delegate population for both time periods.

The hypotheses in this study are based on the notions of "intentions" and "activities" of organizational leadership mentioned above. By "intentions" I mean the policy preferences of the leadership based on both their goal priorities as well as deeply internalized value and interest sets. By "activities" I mean the actual policies adopted by the leadership in the form of resolutions passed over a seven year period. Internal to these preferences and priorities is the time sequence factor. Leadership preferences change and the policy-makers are also subject to turnover.

The NFPC, as reflected in their resolutions over the past seven years, reflects the following pattern of policy change. The

"rights" and "interests" of priests dominated its activity from 1968 to 1972, and then sharply dropped as issues of major concern. On the other hand, the "commonweal" issues increasingly became more important from 1972 onwards. In the first period 71% of the resolutions were about priestly concerns and complaints such as personnel matters while 29% were of a commonweal or social justice nature. In contrast, the second period of the NFPC's history was dominated by broader societal concerns (74%) compared to the particular concerns (26%) of the priests (see Stewart, 1974).

The hypotheses in this study are: (1) goal priority of the leadership will be positively associated with goal effectiveness. The question arises how does one measure effectiveness or progress. The only way I felt I could measure normative goal effectiveness was to ask the leadership's assessment. There is an inherent danger here of a self-fulfilling prophecy. In setting priorities, the leadership can slip into the error of evaluating with higher marks goals they assigned higher priority. I attempted some control, however. For instance, they reported very high effectiveness regarding the due process goal but very little effectiveness regarding the goal of optional celibacy. NFPC documents as well as the printed media both secular and religious did support the leadership's assessment of the effectiveness of these goals. (2) Value- and interest-orientations of the leadership will be positively but differentially associated with the multiple goals of the NFPC. More precisely the basic value of human freedom to think and judge for oneself will be more associated with commonweal goals while particular interests of priests will be more associated with priests' rights and privileges.

(3) Goal priority and value- and interest-orientations, taken together, will be more strongly associated with goal effectiveness than found in the first two hypotheses. (4) Lastly, over time, the value-orientation of the leadership will become an increasingly important factor in explaining the assessment of goal effectiveness.

One item was used to measure the value-orientation of the leadership. The item questioned the degree to which the belief in freedom of conscience was personally meaningful. This basic right, while taken for granted by most Americans, has been quite crucial for priests in the light of changing attitudes toward episcopal and papal authority especially regarding doctrine and church law.

Interest-oriented persons, according to Neal (1965:45-64), are always careful not to jeopardize their position; thus action is taken both with caution and consideration of legitimate authority. One item was employed which questioned the importance to the NFPC of the Catholic Bishops' official recognition of the NFPC for its effective operation.

Priority was measured by asking the respondents how important each goal was. Effectiveness was measured by asking the respondents to assess the progress for each goal. The value, interest, and priority items were Likert-type scales and were dichotomized into high and low. The responses to progress of the goals were simply "good" or "poor." Spearman rho coefficients were used.

In selecting the goals, I utilized four goals that seem from the organization's documents and resolutions to be of wider concern than solely the interests of affiliates. I have called these

commonweal goals. They were the goals of (1) representative voice for all priests, (2) due process for all priests, (3) social action programs, and (4) experimental ministries. I chose two goals or issues that seem to measure the particular interests of the NFPC affiliates. This judgment was again based on the organization's documents. These goals were (1) development of professional standards and (2) realistic discussions about the possibility of optional celibacy for the priests.

Findings and Discussion

First of all, I will provide descriptive data on the priority and effectiveness of actual goals of the NFPC. See Table 1. Inspecting the 1969 and 1972 columns, one discovers a general pattern in which higher priority goals are perceived to be both the actual goals and register the greater effectiveness. It is important to note by 1972 all six goals were considered high priority.

When one looks at effectiveness over time, it varies. In absolute terms, the commonweal goals register greater effectiveness. Moreover, relatively speaking, the two commonweal goals of social action and experimental ministries register greater effectiveness in contrast to the particularistic goals. The reason for the lower estimate of effectiveness for the two particularistic goals is due in part to the controversy surrounding them. Development of professional standards would give priests more autonomy; optional celibacy would provide less regulation to one's personal life. The reason why commonweal goals of social action and experimental

ministries register greater progress in the areas than in past years tions in the environment impeding progress in this direction. In sum, effectiveness is affected in part by the constraints of Church authority and its willingness to adopt changes.

There is one other observation. The 1972 Delegates assign much greater priority to the last four goals in Table 1 than the 1969 Delegates. It is important to note that it is these four goals that register greater variation in effectiveness. This points to the need to emphasize again that organizations give priority to different goals at different times and consequently goal effectiveness is differentially assessed. I will now turn to discussing the factors accounting for goal effectiveness.

Place Table 1 about here.

If the leadership places higher priority on some goals rather than others, then barring outside constraints, one would expect more effort and probably more effectiveness toward the realization of the high priority goals. The data in Table 2 below again points to the necessity of considering external barriers.

Place Table 2 about here.

is the old story of high expectations don't automatically translate into realizations. In 1969 the NFPC was both young and aggressive and above all autonomous from the bishops' control. Their demands for changes in the priestly life, role, social action, and ministry were viewed as a threat to episcopal power. The climate in the Church at that time militated against the achievement of external goals, that is, goals which they had little or no control over. The only organizational goal, an internal one, in which they had control was that of developing a representative voice. It was on this goal that priority and progress had its strongest relationship in both Time 1 and Time 2.

There is, in general, a pattern of relationships between priority and effectiveness in the 1972 data. Priority is more strongly associated with each goal effectiveness. Thus the first hypothesis is supported. The relationship of priority and progress is the strongest (first three goals) where the priests have met less opposition from the bishops. Regarding the due process issue, the NFPC faced a great deal of opposition by the bishops because of certain historical events of 1969 and 1970 (see Stewart, 1974). This opposition leveled in 1972. The negative relationships between priority and progress of the two particularistic goals can be explained in part by the continued strong hostility of the bishops on these matters. In sum, the lesser the external opposition, the priority intentions of the leadership are more strongly related to

Turning to value- and interest-orientation, the second hypothesis is also supported. In both time periods the general pattern holds that value stances influence the assessment of effectiveness of commonweal goals while the interest stance is more strongly associated with particularistic goal effectiveness (see Table 3 below).

Place Table 3 about here.

As mentioned, value-oriented persons feel much more keenly about objectives that have societal worth or common good while interest-oriented persons strive to secure rights for one's own group being careful not to jeopardize their position. People tend to work for the realization in matters which are congruent to their way of thinking and evaluating. Commonweal goals are more to the liking of the value-oriented Delegates as are the particularistic goals congruent to the interest-oriented Delegates.

The important point is the fact that effectiveness is viewed differently by the organization's leaders depending on their intentions and values.

In comparing both time periods, one sees a stronger relationship between the 1972 value-oriented and the commonweal goals in contrast to the 1969 counterparts. This pattern also holds, as

for value- and interest-orientation is correlated with goal effectiveness. This provides support for the fourth hypothesis. As mentioned previously, the activities of the leadership in terms of approved resolutions support the growing trend emphasizing value-related issues.

One finds even stronger associations between goal effectiveness and value- and interest-oriented high priority respondents. Table 4 below supports the third hypothesis. There is one observation I wish to make.

Although the general pattern holds, namely, value and high priority respondents are more strongly related to progress of commonweal goals while interest and high priority respondents attain this relationship with progress of particularistic goals, the differences between these orientations on most goals and in both time periods are not great. The conclusion I draw from this is that regardless of the motivation, be it values or interests, behind assigning high priority to specific goals, it is the motivation effect together with priority which accounts for the assessment of effectiveness.

Place Table 4 here

Conclusions

Although the model presented in this paper specifies four necessary dimensions of organizational effectiveness, I feel goal effectiveness is the most important. It is difficult to deal with the assessment of goal effectiveness of normative organizations because of the intangible nature of many of its goals. I have taken the route of measuring effectiveness from the leadership's perspective. I think the four guidelines set forth by Price noted earlier are of great utility. There is, of course, the possibility of a built-in bias.

One important methodological consideration which needs attention is the factor of opposition. The opposition may be simply public opinion, a competitor serving the same goals, or power brokers. In this study it is the latter which constrains the realization of some goals. I have tried to utilize a variety of NFPC documents to validate both these constraints and the leadership's subjective assessment of goal effectiveness. Gross has pointed to a fruitful avenue of research in pointing to the consideration of "intentions" and "activities" of the leadership. This report is a venture in this direction.

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FIGURE I. A SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS MODEL

Career Stages		Functional Requirements	Objectives	Effectiveness
	Foundation	*Adaptation (External) *Adaptation (Internal)	Acquisition Power	Acquisition Power
	Consolidation	*Integration and *Latency (cohesion) Adaptation (Internal)	Consolidation	Consolidation
Performance	Operation	*Adaptation (External) *Adaptation (Internal) Integration and Latency (cohesion) Goal Attainment	Acquisition Power	Acquisition Power
	Attainment	*Goal attainment Adaptation Integration and Latency (cohesion)	Goal	Goal

*Dominant (theoretically speaking)

Table 1. Priority and Effectiveness of Actual Goals of the NFPC by Council Type*

(reported in percentages)

	High Priority		Actually Pursued		Good Progress		
	1969 Total Delegates	1972 Total Delegates	1969 Total Delegates	1972 Total Delegates	1969 Total Delegates	1972 Total Delegates	Variations in Effectiveness
Commonweal Goals:							
Due Process	86	94	95	90	78	80	02
Representative Voice	80	93	91	86	67	71	03
Social Action Programs	63	92	68	82	30	50	20
Experimental Ministries	56	92	60	80	13	46	33
Particularistic Goals:							
Professional Standards	65	91	78	72	21	39	18
Optional Celibacy	54	80	71	75	25	35	10

*The N for 1969 Delegates is 203; for 1972, N is 186

Table 2. Relationships Between Priority of Goals and Goal Effectiveness

Progress of:	1969 Priority of the goal	1972 Priority of the goal
Becoming a representative voice	.337	.854
Developing experimental ministries	.206	.469
Launching social action programs	.193	.441
Developing structures of due process	.122	.382
Developing professional standards	-.124	-.028
Launching discussions on celibacy	-.213	-.163

Table 3. Relationship of Value and Interest Factors with Goal Effectiveness

Goal Effectiveness	1969		1972	
	Value Factor	Interest Factor	Value Factor	Interest Factor
Commonweal Goal				
Due Process	.341	.304	.305	.198
Representative Voice	.390	.205	.415	.228
Social Action Programs	.322	.295	.370	.119
Experimental Ministries	.341	.320	.538	.318
Particularistic Goal				
Professional Standards	.230	.372	.103	.321
Optional Celibacy	.045	.375	.179	.361

Table 4. Relationship of Value- and Interest-Orientation and High Priority to Goal Effectiveness

Goal Effectiveness	High Priority 1969		High Priority 1972	
	Value Factor	Interest Factor	Value Factor	Interest Factor
Commonweal goals				
Due Process	.642	.603	.719	.699
Representative Voice	.579	.574	.733	.721
Social Action Programs	.572	.537	.639	.622
Experimental Ministries	.554	.467	.238*	.176*
Particularistic goals				
Professional Standards	.581	.725	.421	.457
Optional Celibacy	.445	.477	.598	.669

*These low scores are probably due to program error.